

## Questions and Answers: Cancer Studies at the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center

### 1. What is the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center?

The Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Federal Government's principal agency for biomedical research. The Clinical Center is a research hospital designed to foster the interaction of laboratory and clinical research. It supports studies conducted by the various components of the NIH.

National Cancer Institute (NCI) studies at the Clinical Center are designed to evaluate promising new ways to prevent, detect, diagnose, or treat cancer and to answer scientific questions.

### 2. Who can be a patient in NCI studies at the Clinical Center?

All individuals treated at the Clinical Center are participants in clinical trials (research studies). In order to enter a trial, each patient needs to meet specific medical eligibility requirements. The patient's doctor is asked to supply the Clinical Center with detailed medical information. For this reason, it is necessary that anyone interested in participating in a clinical trial be referred to the Clinical Center by a doctor.

### 3. How can cancer patients enter a clinical trial at the Clinical Center?

Interested cancer patients should first discuss their options with their doctor. If a clinical trial at the Clinical Center is an option, the following is a list of steps patients and doctors should take:

- C To find out if there is a study available for a specific cancer, patients and physicians can call the NCI's Clinical Studies Support Center (CSSC) at 1-888-624-1937 weekdays between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., eastern time.

The CSSC is staffed by oncology (cancer) nurses and information specialists, who can identify clinical trials that may be appropriate for the patient. CSSC staff can mail or fax clinical trial summaries or other information about these trials, including the type of treatment being offered, the type of patients eligible for the trial, and other useful information.

- C Patients should review the clinical trial summaries with their doctor to decide which study to consider further. The doctor should then contact the CSSC to communicate with the NCI investigator in charge of the study.
- C Patients who meet the initial medical eligibility requirements may be asked to schedule a screening visit at the Clinical Center. During the screening visit, patients learn more about the clinical trial. They may also be asked to undergo some tests during the screening visit.
- C Before agreeing to take part in the study, patients need to understand key information about the clinical trial, including details about the treatment, tests, and possible risks and benefits. After discussing all aspects of the study, patients receive an informed consent form to read and sign.

Healthy individuals interested in being part of cancer prevention trials can also call the CSSC for information. As with treatment trials, individuals are carefully screened before entering a prevention study.

#### **4. How much does it cost to participate in a clinical trial at the Clinical Center?**

As part of the Federal Government, the Clinical Center provides treatment in clinical trials at no cost to the patient. Patients may also receive a stipend to help cover some of the costs of traveling to Bethesda for treatment and followup care. However, participants are responsible for the travel costs for the screening visit.

#### **5. How are patients who take part in clinical trials at the Clinical Center protected?**

Every effort is made to protect and promote the welfare of the patient and provide the best medical and nursing care. Research needs may require longer periods of hospitalization than would be expected in a general hospital. Clinical Center patients also have more examinations and tests than are usually given, and followup examinations are often required because of the nature of the study.

As in any other hospital across the country, all patients at the Clinical Center are protected by the Patient's Bill of Rights. The Bill ensures that patients' medical records remain private.

In addition, each study is carefully reviewed for risks and merit by a panel of doctors, researchers, community leaders, and the Food and Drug Administration. No test or

treatment is ever given that is unnecessarily hazardous to the patient. The patient is always free to decline to participate in any aspect of the study at any time.

**6. Why do people participate in clinical trials?**

Although treatments under study do not always turn out to be more effective than the standard (established) treatment, clinical trials are very important. Treatment studies often lead to the development of more effective cancer treatments. If a new treatment proves effective in a study, not only does it benefit the study participants, but it can become a new standard treatment that may help many patients. Because of progress made through clinical trials, many people with cancer are cured and many others have longer, more comfortable lives.

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**Sources of National Cancer Institute Information**

**Cancer Information Service**

Toll-free: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

TTY (for deaf and hard of hearing callers): 1-800-332-8615

**NCI Online**

***Internet***

Use <http://www.cancer.gov> to reach NCI's Web site.

***CancerMail Service***

To obtain a contents list, send e-mail to [cancermail@icicc.nci.nih.gov](mailto:cancermail@icicc.nci.nih.gov) with the word "help" in the body of the message.

**CancerFax® fax on demand service**

Dial 301-402-5874 and listen to recorded instructions.

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